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detecting the removal of a printed coupon from said appliance and thereafter automatically
printing an additional coupon for distribution.--

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed July 31, 2001 and the references cited therein have been carefully considered. Applicants have reviewed the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review and will address the issues raised therein upon an indication of allowable subject matter in the application.

In the aforesaid Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 and 21-22, 24-25 as being directly anticipated within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §102 over Jones et al. (5,978,013). In addition, claims 4 and 23 were rejected as being obvious within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §103 over Jones et al. in view of Von Kohorn (5,249,044); claim 13 was rejected as being obvious within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §103 over Jones et al. in view of Wright (6,085,972); claims 5-9 were rejected as being obvious within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §103 over de Lapa et al. (5,353,218); claim 10 was rejected as being obvious within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §103 over de Lapa et al. in view of Rutledge (6,205,321); and claims 11 and 12 were rejected as being obvious within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §103 over de Lapa et al. in view of Von Kohorn.

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the patentable features of the present invention and now recites:

A system for distributing packets of information to individuals at selected retail locations, said system including:

means for creating said packets of information in a digital format;

a wireless network for transmitting said packets of information to said retail locations;
and

a network of printer appliances at said locations, each of said appliances being adapted to:

receive said transmitted packets of information from said wireless network;
process and store selected packets of information from all those received,
convert said selected packets of information into a printed format for distribution
to said individuals, and

automatically print said selected packets .

It will be appreciated that the system of claim 1, amended, offers numerous advantages over the prior art in that it provides a totally wireless system for conveying packets of information to a retail establishment where printed packets are automatically dispensed to customers without the need for intervention by an operator. The prior art relied upon by the Examiner neither teaches or suggests such a unique combination.

The Jones patent cited by the Examiner is actually a commonly owned case and applicants are intimately familiar with the subject matter thereof. Jones is directed to an earlier version of this product known as Coupon Select that was intended to dispense coupons to consumers in their homes via commercials relayed across a cable channel. As the commercial was aired, the viewer was alerted that a discount coupon, connected to the advertised product, was available. To acquire the coupon, the viewer had to interactively make a request within the television system using a remote control. A printing appliance connected to the television would then issue the coupon. Coupon availability was limited to a short time window (several minutes) immediately following the airing of the commercial. As one can readily appreciate, this hard wired system is not practical in a retail environment where promotional materials must be readily available to a continuous flow of shoppers.

In contrast, the system of claim 1, amended, relies on a wireless distribution network such as those used by pager companies which dispenses multiple, free-standing packets of information to consumers on an automatic basis. There is no television connection, no association with commercials and no electronic interaction between the consumer and the system as is required in the Jones Coupon Select system. Instead, the printer appliances are adapted to receive all of the packets of information transmitted over this wireless network, select and store those packets intended for processing by the

appliance, and then automatically print out the selected packets. Pre-printed packets of information, typically coupons, are available for easy hand retrieval by the consumer at shelf dispensers adjacent to the product or at other locations in the retail environment.

Applicants submit that claim 1, amended, now patentably distinguishes over the Jones patent since it neither teaches nor suggests the use of a wireless network that broadly transmits packets of information or an appliance that receives and selectively processes and prints only those packets intended for such appliance.

The other references cited by the Examiner and applied against other dependent claims have been considered as well but none either disclose or suggest the unique combination offered by the system of claim 1, amended. Von Kohorn describes a method of printing multiple coupons also using a cable television system where multiple coupons may be printed by direct user invention rather than by the automatic means of claim 1, amended.

De Lapa et al. describes a sophisticated micro-targeting system to deliver the most relevant group of discount coupons to particular consumer based upon deep surveys of characteristics that influence buying patterns. Print design and format is configured to minimize postage costs because the packet is mailed to consumer. At the same time, information is relayed to participating retailers to notify them that these coupon offers are valid. This information package carries validity data only and does not carry information that would permit the actual printing of the coupons. As the Examiner can appreciate, this method is entirely different from the system of claim 1, amended where a wireless network is employed that is adapted to transmit packets of information to a plurality of appliances that are able to receive, selectively process and automatically print out the selected packets.

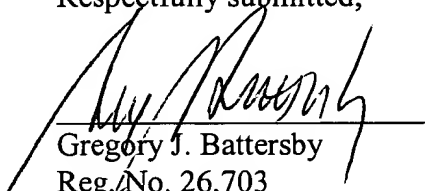
Wright is directed to nothing other than a retail terminal and fails to teach or suggest the system of claim 1, amended.

Accordingly, applicants submit that claim 1, amended, patentably distinguishes over all of the references cited by the Examiner, taken alone or in combination, and is condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 2-4 depend from and further restrict claim 1, amended, and applicants submit that these claims likewise distinguish over these references for the same reason as claim 1, amended. The remaining independent claims, namely, claims 5, 21 and 24 have been amended in the same manner as claim 1, amended, to more clearly identify the patentable features of the invention. Applicants submit that in view of these amendment, these claims and all claims that depend from and further restrict them, patentably distinguish over the references of records, whether taken alone or in combination, and are also in condition for immediate allowance.

In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that all claims are in condition for immediate allowance. Reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are therefore requested. In the event that the Examiner should determine that the aforesaid Amendment does not place the case in condition for immediate allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone to discuss what additional steps would be necessary to immediately place the case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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